

## MEMORANDUM

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

NGA review completed

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October 19, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: WILLIAM L. STEARMAN *WLS*

SUBJECT: North Vietnamese Military and Economic Imports

NSA and DIA reviews  
completed

CIA/DIA, at our request, prepared a report (Tab A) on North Vietnamese military and economic imports which concludes that Sino-Soviet military aid continues at reduced rate but that such a cutback has only a minimal effect on Hanoi's immediate offensive capabilities. The report emphasizes that our information is extremely sketchy and contains only the best indicators of recent imports. While stipulating that there is no conclusive proof of post-cease-fire deliveries, it acknowledges that Hanoi probably still is receiving "some" military equipment. Drawing on somewhat weaker information not cited by the report, we are more confident that possibly substantial military imports are continuing. George Carver, in his covering memorandum (Tab A), comes to the same conclusion.

The CIA/DIA study at Tab A notes the following non-categorical evidence indicating that Hanoi still is receiving equipment:

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-- Intercepted communications in April and June revealing the presence of two new types of significantly improved radars (TALL KING and FLAP WHEEL) and between January and August the import of some 4,000 trucks (800 more than observed being delivered last year in the same period).

-- The high rate of NVA logistic activity within Indochina and the resulting circumstantial evidence that Hanoi would not be sending so much equipment and ordnance south unless it were being replaced in the north

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with recent imports. (A related National Intelligence Estimate on Vietnam's short-term prospects concluded that Hanoi now has moved sufficient supplies into the South and adjacent areas to support intense fighting through an entire dry season.)

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-- PRC-DRV military aid protocol, signed on October 5; signature of a DRV-Soviet economic aid agreement which, however, omitted all mention of military items. (On the other hand, the Deputy Defense Ministers of both parties attended the ceremony.)

On the civil import side, Hanoi's total imports of economic goods in 1973 may reach a new high of 2.8 million tons, roughly 55% over the 1972 level and 400,000 tons greater than the peak 1971 year. Seaborne imports will probably account for 1.3 million tons while 1.5 million tons are expected to arrive overland. Highlighting the scarcity of information on overland imports, we have so far actually detected only 140,000 tons arriving overland versus nearly 1.1 million tons delivered by sea.

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(Foodstuffs constitute 70% of the observed overland deliveries and 33% of the seaborne shipments, for an observed total of over one half million tons. The installation of pipelines from China since 1971 has greatly increased the capability for overland POL deliveries to the DRV.)

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In the area of reconstruction, the report notes that most of Hanoi's imports represent commodities to maintain consumption and to rebuild war damaged stocks. Hanoi's recovery efforts have been slow moving, and progress has been limited (electric power is at about 2/3 of pre-bombing levels while most other industries have recovered only a fraction of their pre-war capacity).

### Comment

By admission of its own drafters, the CIA/DIA report is a very conservative estimate of DRV military imports and includes only the surest evidences of recent deliveries. Even on this basis, we would conclude that Moscow and Peking may well have replaced most, if not all, of Hanoi's losses in the 1972 offensive, thus allowing the DRV to pursue a military option. Other

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less definitive evidence, however, does exist which reinforces the judgment that Hanoi has again replenished its rear stocks of heavy equipment (at a time uncertain) and suggests (but does not prove) that very substantial military deliveries are continuing.

We cite the following instances to support our somewhat stronger conclusion:

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-- Intercepted references on September 21 to an improved model of the SA-7 missile being tested fired in the North (improvements very possibly were conducted in-country).

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-- A DIA analysis of August 23 that doubled our estimates of existing tank storage capacity at the NVA's principal armor park and thus concluded that the DRV's armor inventory in the North now stands at least at 200-220. (CIA carries a higher inventory -- 300 armored vehicles -- and privately speculates that there may be even more tanks in storage.)

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From the above and the information provided by the attached report, we are inclined to believe that Hanoi has been receiving very substantial military imports and is probably not concerned about its logistics pipelines from Moscow or Peking.

In any case, the report points up the urgent need for improved intelligence coverage -- especially photo reconnaissance -- of Hanoi's military imports.

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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

17 October 1973

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

**SUBJECT :** Soviet and Chinese Aid to North  
Vietnam Since the Signing of  
the Paris Agreement

1. Attached are five copies of a memorandum on Soviet and Chinese aid to North Vietnam prepared at your request as relayed through Mr. William Stearman of the NSC Staff. As the "Key Points" on page one of the memorandum indicate, the extent of our hard data and factual information on this subject leaves a good deal to be desired. Nevertheless, in the several months since we last memorialized you on Soviet and Chinese aid

[redacted] we have acquired an appreciable volume of evidence which -- while not conclusive -- strongly suggests that a substantial amount of military as well as economic aid is still flowing into North Vietnam.

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2. As Mr. Stearman requested, this study was prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Both agencies are in full agreement with the conclusions and all specifics of the report.

3. I am sending other copies of this report to Secretary Schlesinger, Deputy Secretary Clements, Admiral Moorer, Deputy Secretary Rush, Deputy Assistant Secretary Hummel and the Directors of the Defense Intelligence Agency and INR.

*G. A. Carver, Jr.*  
George A. Carver, Jr.

Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

**Attachment**

[redacted] Copies 1 through 5

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Copy No. 6 - Secretary Schlesinger  
Copy No. 7 - Deputy Secretary Clements  
Copy No. 8 - Admiral Moorer  
Copy No. 9 - Deputy Secretary Rush  
Copy No. 10 - Deputy Assistant Secretary Hummel  
Copy No. 11 - Vice Admiral de Poix  
Copy No. 12 - Mr. Cline

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# Intelligence Memorandum

*Communist Military and Economic Assistance to North Vietnam  
Since The Paris Agreement Was Signed*



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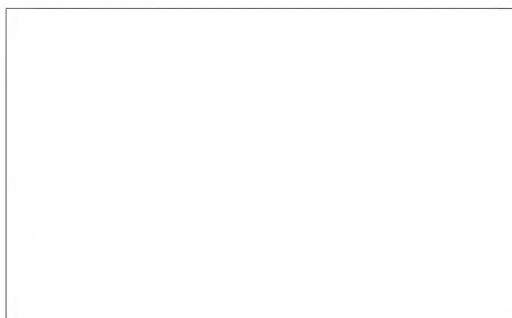
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# Intelligence Memorandum

*Communist Military and Economic Assistance to North Vietnam  
Since The Paris Agreement Was Signed*



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17 October 1973

**Communist Military and Economic  
Assistance to North Vietnam  
Since the Paris Agreement  
Was Signed**

**The Key Points**

● There has been little direct evidence on military imports by North Vietnam since the signing of the Paris Agreement on 27 January 1973, or since our last memorandum on this subject [redacted] dated 13 July 1973). The key PRC/North Vietnam border crossing, where large amounts of military hardware were seen before the cease-fire, has been photographed less than a dozen times since January, and cloud cover has limited the value of even this photography. [redacted]

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[redacted] some indications of continuing military imports, but nothing that would give us a feel for the overall level of such imports.

● The sum of our evidence, however, indicates the North Vietnamese have continued to receive military aid from both the PRC and the USSR, although at a rate well below that received during 1972.

● The relevance of such a cutback to North Vietnam's immediate military capabilities is probably minimal, since North Vietnam already has an inventory of military equipment large enough to sustain a major offensive for the duration of an entire dry season. Logistic activity in Indochina has continued at a high level in recent months, and the North Vietnamese are now preparing to move additional quantities of goods through the Laotian Panhandle.

● Hanoi continues to receive firm assurances of economic assistance from its Communist allies. [redacted]

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[redacted] Spurred by continued large overland deliveries, Hanoi's total imports in 1973 may reach a new peak of 2.8 million metric tons.

Note: This memorandum was prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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**Discussion**

**Military Aid**

***Direct Evidence***

1. Since the Vietnam Settlement Agreement was signed on 27 January, our ability to estimate Soviet and Chinese military aid going to North Vietnam has been impaired by the low level of photo-reconnaissance over North Vietnam. We now have no photography from manned overflights of North Vietnam,

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While photography has confirmed that the North Vietnamese have received a steady inflow of Soviet and PRC imports throughout the post-cease-fire period, the quality and infrequency of the photography have made it impossible to identify any military equipment as having definitely arrived since the Paris Agreement was signed.

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of Hanoi - a point known to have been used before the cease-fire as a military transloading point. Although this equipment may have been in transit within the country, the past history of the facility at Phuc Yen suggests that at least some of the equipment had recently arrived in Vietnam.

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13. On 8 June, China and North Vietnam signed a military and economic aid pact for 1974, indicating that some military aid would continue. More recently, on 5 October, a protocol to implement the 8 June agreement on Chinese military equipment and materials in 1974 for North Vietnam was signed in Peking. On the other hand, there has been no mention of a military aid pact with the USSR in the press, despite the fact that the North Vietnamese and the Soviets conducted extensive aid negotiations during June which culminated in the signing of an economic aid agreement.

#### **Future Aid Deliveries**

14. In any case, we believe that there has been a slackening of military aid in recent months in one important area. With the halt in US air operations over North Vietnam, Hanoi's requirement for surface-to-air missiles and other types of air defense equipment has fallen to only a fraction of its previous level. Since it seems likely that Hanoi replenished its stocks early this year, after the intensive bombing which ended in December 1972, there would be no need for further deliveries beyond this unless the air war was resumed. Communist military assistance probably will continue at least to the extent necessary to replace and maintain North Vietnam's current inventories. In addition, because North Vietnam's weapons production capability is limited to small arms and ammunition, its sophisticated air defense equipment requires foreign assistance for spare parts and probably for repairs and maintenance as well. The Soviets will almost certainly have to provide continued training and replacement parts for such sophisticated weaponry as the SA-3 missiles. Hard evidence indicates that the Chinese, for their part, are still involved in the maintenance of North Vietnamese radar installations, and they are likely to continue such activity for some time to come.

#### **Economic Aid**

##### ***Total Imports***

15. Hanoi's total imports of economic goods in 1973 may reach a new high of 2.8 million tons, compared with a 1972 level of nearly 1.8 million tons and a pre-mining peak of about 2.4 million tons in 1971. Seaborne imports will probably amount to 1.3 million tons in 1973 - close to the 1972 level but substantially below pre-mining tonnages. However, overland imports could reach 1.5 million tons, more than offsetting any shortfall in seaborne imports.

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17. Major commodities delivered thus far in 1973 continue to be food

[redacted], petroleum [redacted], and fertilizer [redacted]

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Nearly all of the seaborne petroleum has come from the USSR, which has also supplied most of the fertilizer imports and about one-half of the food. Compared to the same period in 1972, when seaborne shipping was restricted by the mining, 1973 imports of food are higher [redacted]

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[redacted] fertilizer is higher [redacted]

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but petroleum is lower [redacted] apparently because of overland deliveries via the China-North Vietnam pipeline system.

***Overland***

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### Reconstruction

21. Much of the current imports represent commodities to maintain consumption levels and rebuild war-damaged stocks. Some imports, however, consist of machinery and equipment to support Hanoi's slow-moving reconstruction efforts. [redacted] ongoing negotiations for such items as vehicles, locomotives, metal products, construction materials, agricultural machinery, fishing trawlers, fertilizers, foodstuffs, and other goods. These supplies are being provided to North Vietnam under the terms of the 1973 aid agreements signed last winter.

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22. In addition to commodity transactions and project aid, the Communist countries are providing substantial amounts of technical assistance for North Vietnam's reconstruction program under the terms of the 1973 aid agreements. [redacted]

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[redacted] North Vietnam, where Moscow is currently supporting 91 capital construction projects. Chinese assistance involves [redacted] 47 projects. The East European countries have sent goods and technicians for 51 projects. Virtually all of North Vietnam's bomb-damaged industrial installations appear on the project lists, and some new construction is occurring in electric power, coal mining, fertilizer production, and geological prospecting.

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23. Notwithstanding these efforts, the actual progress to date in reconstruction has been limited. Electric power capacity is about two-thirds of pre-bombing levels. In textiles, cement, and steel production, only a small

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fraction of capacity is back in service. Coal exports have been resumed on a significant scale, but probably because of depressed demand in the general economy. Greatly increased foreign aid will be required to complete the reconstruction program. As this aid picks up, we can expect further changes in the composition of North Vietnam's imports toward machinery and equipment and away from commodities.

#### **Aid Negotiations**

24. In addition to its current aid receipts, Hanoi has already obtained commitments from most of the Communist aid donors for assistance in 1974. North Vietnam has signed agreements calling for both military and economic aid for 1974 with China, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Mongolia, and North Korea. Thus far, Moscow has announced an economic aid pact for 1974 but none pertaining to military assistance, and no agreements have yet been signed with Czechoslovakia or East Germany. The North Vietnamese, however, are expected to obtain commitments at least for economic aid from the two remaining East European aid donors.

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